

§ 386.13 Petitions to review and request for hearing: Driver qualification proceedings.

(a) Within 60 days after service of the determination under § 391.47 of this chapter or the letter of disqualification, the driver or carrier may petition to review such action. Such petitions must be submitted to the Assistant Administrator and must contain the following:

(1) Identification of what action the petitioner wants overturned;

(2) Copies of all evidence upon which petitioner relies in the form set out in § 386.49;

(3) All legal and other arguments which the petitioner wishes to make in support of his/her position;

(4) A request for oral hearing, if one is desired, which must set forth material factual issues believed to be in dispute;

(5) Certification that the reply has been filed in accordance with § 386.31; and

(6) Any other pertinent material.

(b) Failure to submit a petition as specified in paragraph (a) of this section shall constitute a waiver of the right to petition for review of the determination or letter of disqualification. In these cases, the determination or disqualification issued automatically becomes the final decision of the Assistant Administrator 30 days after the time to submit the reply or petition to review has expired, unless the Assistant Administrator orders otherwise.

(c) If the petition does not request a hearing, the Assistant Administrator may issue a final decision and order based on the evidence and arguments submitted.

§ 386.14 Reply.

(a) *Time for reply to the Notice of Claim.* Respondent must serve a reply to the Notice of Claim in writing within 30 days following service of the Notice of Claim. The reply is to be served in accordance with § 386.6 upon the Service Center indicated in the Notice of Claim.

(b) *Options for reply.* The respondent must reply to the Notice of Claim within the time allotted by choosing one of the following:

(1) Paying the full amount asserted in the Notice of Claim in accordance with § 386.18 of this part;

(2) Contesting the claim by requesting administrative adjudication pursuant to paragraph (d) of this section; or

(3) Seeking binding arbitration in accordance with the Agency's program. Although the amount of the proposed penalty may be disputed, referral to binding arbitration is contingent upon an admission of liability that the violations occurred.

(c) *Failure to answer the Notice of Claim.* (1) Respondent's failure to answer the Notice of Claim in accordance with paragraph (a) may result in the issuance of a Notice of Default and Final Agency Order by the Field Administrator. The Notice of Default and Final Agency Order will declare respondent to be in default and further declare the Notice of Claim, including the civil penalty proposed in the Notice of Claim, to be the Final Agency Order in the proceeding. The Final Agency Order will be effective five days following service of the Notice of Default and Final Agency Order.

(2) The default constitutes an admission of all facts alleged in the Notice of Claim and a waiver of respondent's opportunity to contest the claim. The default will be reviewed by the Assistant Administrator in accordance with § 386.64(b), and the Final Agency Order may be vacated where a respondent demonstrates excusable neglect, a meritorious defense, or due diligence in seeking relief.

(3) Failure to pay the civil penalty as directed in a Final Agency Order constitutes a violation of that order, subjecting the respondent to an additional penalty as prescribed in Subpart G of this part.

(d) *Request for administrative adjudication.* The respondent may contest the claim and request administrative adjudication pursuant to paragraph (b)(2) of this section. An administrative adjudication is a process to resolve contested claims before the Assistant Administrator, Administrative Law Judge, or Hearing Officer. Once an administrative adjudication option is elected, it is binding on the respondent.

(1) *Contents.* In addition to the general requirements of this section, the

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reply must be in writing and state the grounds for contesting the claim and must raise any affirmative defenses the respondent intends to assert. Specifically, the reply:

(i) Must admit or deny each separately stated and numbered allegation of violation in the claim. A statement that the person is without sufficient knowledge or information to admit or deny will have the effect of a denial. Any allegation in the claim not specifically denied in the reply is deemed admitted. A mere general denial of the claim is insufficient and may result in a default being entered by the Agency decisionmaker upon motion by the Field Administrator.

(ii) Must include all known affirmative defenses, including those relating to jurisdiction, limitations, and procedure.

(iii) Must state which one of the following options respondent seeks:

(A) To submit written evidence without hearing; or

(B) An informal hearing; or

(C) A formal hearing.

(2) [Reserved]

[70 FR 28481, May 18, 2005]

§ 386.15 [Reserved]

§ 386.16 Action on replies to the Notice of Claim.

(a) *Requests to submit written evidence without a hearing.* Where respondent has elected to submit written evidence in accordance with § 386.14(d)(1)(iii)(A):

(1) Agency Counsel must serve all written evidence and argument in support of the Notice of Claim no later than 60 days following service of respondent's reply. The written evidence and argument must be served on the Assistant Administrator in accordance with §§ 386.6 and 386.7. The submission must include all pleadings, notices, and other filings in the case to date.

(2) Respondent will, not later than 45 days following service of Agency Counsel's written evidence and argument, serve its written evidence and argument on the Assistant Administrator in accordance with §§ 386.6 and 386.7.

(3) Agency Counsel may file a written response to respondent's submission. Any such submission must be filed

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within 20 days of service of respondent's submission.

(4) All written evidence submitted by the parties must conform to the requirements of § 386.49.

(5) Following submission of evidence and argument as outlined in this section, the Assistant Administrator may issue a Final Agency Order and order based on the evidence and arguments submitted, or may issue any other order as may be necessary to adjudicate the matter.

(b) *Requests for hearing.* (1) If a request for a formal or informal hearing has been filed, the Assistant Administrator will determine whether there exists a dispute of a material fact at issue in the matter. If so, the matter will be set for hearing in accordance with respondent's reply. If it is determined that there does not exist a dispute of a material fact at issue in the matter, the Assistant Administrator may issue a decision based on the written record, or may request the submission of further evidence or argument.

(2) If a respondent requests a formal or informal hearing in its reply, the Field Administrator must serve upon the Assistant Administrator and respondent a notice of consent or objection with a basis to the request within 60 days of service of respondent's reply. Failure to serve an objection within the time allotted may result in referral of the matter to hearing.

(3) *Requests for formal hearing.* Following the filing of an objection with basis, the Field Administrator must serve a motion for Final Agency Order pursuant to § 386.36 unless otherwise ordered by the Assistant Administrator. The motion must set forth the reasons why the Field Administrator is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. Respondent must, within 45 days of service of the motion for Final Agency Order, submit and serve a response to the Field Administrator's motion. After reviewing the record, the Assistant Administrator will either set the matter for hearing by referral to the Office of Hearings or issue a Final Agency Order based upon the submissions.

(4) *Requests for informal hearing.* (i) If the Field Administrator objects with